

Cardinal Hinsley Mathematics and Computing College

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 101564 |
| Local Authority | Brent |
| Inspection number | 323478 |
| Inspection dates | 6–7 May 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Patricia Metham HMI |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Comprehensive |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Boys |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 517 |
| Sixth form | 39 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Teresa Outred |
| Headteacher | Mr Richard Kolka |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24–25 May 2006 |
| School address | Harlesden Road London NW10 3RN |
| Telephone number | 020 8965 3947 |
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| Email address | office.chmcc.brent@lgfl.net |

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|--------------------|--------------|
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| Inspection date(s) | 6–7 May 2009 |
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, students and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the systems for assessing and monitoring students' progress, the work that students had produced in their books, the quality of teachers' marking and the questionnaires completed by 157 parents or carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the teaching in meeting the needs of all students, including those in the early stages of acquiring English
- the impact on students' well-being and personal development of strategies put in place by the school's leadership team
- the impact of the school's specialism on curriculum development, teaching and learning
- the impact of recent strategies to raise levels of attainment.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average, Catholic boys' school with a high proportion of students from minority ethnic groups. Nearly two thirds have English as a second language. A high proportion of students join the school at other than conventional times and a greater proportion than average are eligible for free school meals. A high proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, predominantly moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social issues. Until September 2008, the school was in a hard federation with a neighbouring girls' school. The two schools continue to offer combined sixth-form provision. Cardinal Hinsley gained specialist Mathematics and Computing status in 2006. Additional vocational options are offered to boys in Years 10 and 11 through the school's collaboration with the College of North West London. The school is also an active member of a Catholic cluster of schools focusing on Diplomas, Extended Schools and Aimhigher initiatives.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The exuberance, sense of purpose and culture of mutual respect radiated by students, parents and staff alike make Cardinal Hinsley a most welcoming and engaging school. It provides a good quality of education.

Students enter the school with comparatively low levels of previous attainment and make good progress. The targets set for the school's specialist subjects – mathematics, and information and communications technology (ICT) – were exceeded in 2008. The percentage of students gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics has improved significantly, but overall levels of attainment are currently below the national average. Many students face considerable challenges in adapting to National Curriculum requirements, especially the substantial proportion joining at other than conventional times and with very limited knowledge of English. Well-targeted interventions from most teachers, learning mentors and support staff ensure that individuals and groups at risk of falling behind their peers are given the help and encouragement that they need in order to make good progress. A similar pattern of good progress but relatively low attainment is evident in the sixth form.

Teaching was good or better in over half of the lessons observed. The best were characterised by lively pace, high expectations, a variety of approach to meet different learning styles, confident subject knowledge and effective use of peer- and self-assessment to drive learning. There was lack of pace and an over-reliance on worksheets or text books in the less effective lessons seen and there were fewer examples of students evaluating what they had learnt and how they could improve. Teachers' marking of written work varied in quality, not always combining encouragement with specific guidance on how students could do better. Despite recent investment in computers, interactive whiteboards and wireless suites for some departments as part of specialist provision, only a few teachers were seen using technology in an imaginative or effectively interactive way.

The outstanding curriculum successfully motivates and engages students. The school has established a valuable partnership with the local college, where students who would struggle with the full mainstream curriculum follow a course designed specifically for them. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities is well matched to students' interests – particularly sport and performing arts – and a programme of overseas trips and visits to places of cultural interest successfully

complements the main curriculum. Sharing sixth-form provision with the girls' convent means that students have an excellent choice of AS, A-level and vocational courses. Students have a good preparation for further education, training or employment.

The school's outstanding strengths lie in the care, guidance and support it unstintingly provides, within a strong Christian ethos. This is an inclusive and cohesive community, where students from diverse cultures and backgrounds learn about and respect each other's heritage and values. This was encapsulated by a Year 9 student's perception of what made the school a good place to be: 'As a Muslim, you find the Catholic religion is close to Islam.' Other students understood his point.

The headteacher is successfully establishing an ambitious vision and distinct character for the school. He is well respected by parents, staff and students, who value his evident care for their well-being as individuals. Members of the senior leadership team bring great commitment and competence to their roles. Individual responsibilities and lines of management are clearly defined and secure. They know the school's strengths and areas for development. There is evidence that recent strategies – for example, to reduce exclusions and to raise standards – have had a positive impact. Middle management is stronger than at the last inspection. Capacity for further improvement is good. While a few parents expressed concerns about lack of consistency in the school's sanctions and about unevenness in the quality of teaching, the overwhelming majority of responses to the questionnaire indicated confidence in the school's leadership and satisfaction with the education their children were being given. The following comment brings together opinions expressed by many: 'The school as a whole has supported my son both academically and emotionally. As a result, he has gained confidence in his ability to work to his full potential both independently and collaboratively.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Raise standards by:

- making sure, through the next cycle of planning, monitoring and evaluation, that students are consistently guided to an accurate understanding of their current levels and know what they must do to improve
- ensuring, through continuing professional development and the embedding of best practice, that teaching is consistently good or better, with imaginative delivery that captures the interest and enthusiasm of all ability levels.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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|---|
| 2 |
|---|

Most students join the school with levels of attainment below the national average. For many, this is compounded by learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Those that join at unconventional times often have a very limited grasp of English.

Students make good progress, with well-directed support for those at risk of underachievement. They have a positive attitude to learning and were seen to make good progress in most of the lessons observed. They worked well collaboratively.

The school uses interpreters effectively to help newcomers engage with the curriculum, but students are encouraged to quickly become independent. More systematic use of data to track students' progress and to set appropriately challenging targets is having a positive impact. There is an upward trend in levels of attainment in all key stages. In 2008 the proportion gaining five or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics met government targets. As the school recognises, however, overall levels of attainment are below the national average. Action to raise standards is a key element in the school's improvement plan.

Students enjoy school, feel safe and treat each other with cheerful goodwill and consideration. Bullying is not felt to be a major problem. Students are confident that any incidents will be promptly and effectively dealt with. Many older students act as mentors. Students' views are taken seriously by the school; for example, a representative of the school council has presented an informal report on their views to the governing body.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|---|
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils feel safe? | 2 |
| How well do pupils behave? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community? | 2 |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 1 |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 2 |
| What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

All teachers and support staff clearly care about the well-being and achievement of students and give additional support whenever needed, which the students appreciate. Senior leaders and heads of department monitor teaching systematically, giving effective support and professional development where areas of relative weakness have been observed. The best teaching combines good subject knowledge with infectious enthusiasm, imaginative use of technology to excite and involve students, and a skilful use of assessment to support learning. The quality of assessment overall is, however, uneven.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The curriculum offers a well-structured range of 'pathways', ensuring that all students find a combination of subjects that meets their needs and gives them a sound foundation for the next stage of their education or training. Specialist status has extended the ICT resources available, with training for teachers to encourage a confident use of the technology. Further support and opportunities for personal development are offered before and after each school day, including revision clubs, reading groups, cadets, sport and drama. The involvement of local organisations such as Queen's Park Rangers football club enhances students' sense of worth and raises their aspirations. The Brent and Harrow Business Education Partnership establishes links between local employers and the school, and runs activities to broaden students' understanding of the opportunities and the expectations they will encounter later.

The school's care and guidance for students is exemplary. Great care is taken to establish positive links with parents and carers and to work with an extensive range of agencies to ensure comprehensive care for vulnerable students. The Learning Inclusion Centre provides excellent support for students seen to be struggling with any aspect of school life. The weekly Social Inclusion forum brings outside agencies together with the school's inclusion team to review individual cases and set up appropriate support strategies. The impact is seen in the significant drop in exclusion and absence rates. Key stage leaders coordinate pastoral and academic care and guidance well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 1 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

A clear and ambitious vision, persuasively communicated by the headteacher and his senior leadership team, has created confidence and a sense of purpose throughout the school and among parents and carers. Morale is high. Governors are fully supportive. Only recently formed after the ending of federation with the girls' convent, the governing body is still clarifying policies, arranging relevant training and establishing roles. Substantial progress has been made in this and statutory requirements are being met.

As an aspect of its specialist status, Cardinal Hinsley has succeeded in persuading a considerable number of parents and carers to attend ICT and mathematics courses at the school, which has strengthened links between the school and its wider community.

While acknowledging the considerable challenges facing many of the students, the school's leadership has set demanding attainment targets and is establishing rigorous monitoring systems to drive improvement. It has been enterprising and successful in

developing partnerships to extend the opportunities available for students. There is evidence that standards are rising.

In this multi-ethnic and multicultural school community, conflicts along social or racial lines are very rare. In its admissions policy, its curriculum design and its pastoral care, the school actively promotes equality and celebrates diversity. The school has meticulously analysed its own community and its place within the neighbourhood. It has audited the effectiveness with which equalities are established in the school and developed excellent strategies to promote students' awareness of their relationship to and place within the local, national and global communities. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and regularly reviewed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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|---|---|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Sixth form

Within the ambitious vision for the school, strongly promoted by the headteacher and his management team, is the development of a strong and secure sixth form with a distinct character, extended through local partnerships. This ambition has been supported by a successful upgrading of sixth-form facilities and resources. Management of the sixth form by a member of the senior leadership team is outstanding. Thorough and regular discussion with students in Years 10 and 11 ensures that students' sixth-form courses are well suited to their abilities and aspirations. The number now deciding to stay on into the sixth form is growing. Each student's progress is carefully tracked and remedial action very promptly taken if there are signs that a student is losing momentum or struggling in any way. Communication with the convent is very good, so that there is continuity of care across the two schools.

Many students enter the sixth form with lower prior attainment than is typical nationally and benefit from timely guidance and encouragement to make the step up to AS, A-level or Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) requirements. There are good systems in place to help them organise their time and priorities

effectively. Students make good progress and standards are rising, although overall levels of attainment are still below national averages. The curriculum successfully meets current needs. Plans are well advanced to increase the vocational options taught on-site, and to extend into the sixth form the course currently provided at the local college for students in Years 10 and 11. Sixth-formers take full advantage of the school's extensive programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

Sixth-formers make a positive contribution to the life of the school, for example as mentors, by helping teach younger students and by leading assemblies. The head boy acts as an effective medium for communication between students and staff.

Sixth-formers also undertake voluntary work in the local community.

Current sixth-formers are enthusiastic ambassadors. One spoke for many in a group discussion: 'I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.'

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| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 2 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 1 |
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

An overwhelming majority of the responses to the parental questionnaire were positive, with comments emphasising the quality and impact of the school's care for students as individuals and the openness and accessibility of the headteacher and senior leaders. In discussion with inspectors, parents spoke of their initial nervousness about the school and their subsequent enthusiasm for its values, its approach to education and its impact on their sons.

A very small number of parents expressed concern about inconsistencies in teaching and in the school's handling of discipline issues. While inspectors found unevenness in the quality of teaching, the school's implementation of sanctions and rewards was seen to be well managed.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Cardinal Hinsley Mathematics and Computing College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 155 completed questionnaires and two that were incomplete. In total, there are 482 parents and carers registered at the school.

| | Always | Most of the time | Occasionally | Never |
|---|--------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 91 | 48 | 10 | 6 |

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|---|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate. |

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



19 May 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Cardinal Hinsley Mathematics and Computing College,
London, NW10 3RN

We greatly appreciated the friendliness and openness with which you responded to our questions and helped us build up an accurate and balanced picture of your school during our recent visit. We agree with your headteacher and teachers that yours is a good school.

Your school's strong sense of community is especially impressive, given the variety of culture and background represented. We could see that you and your teachers share a culture of mutual respect and care for the individual. It was good to know that you feel safe in school and to see that you understand and take seriously the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The school's excellent attendance record shows that you are happy to be there. We found that most of you are keen to fulfil your potential and have a positive attitude to learning. We noted that your results in national tests have been improving, although the overall results are still below national averages.

To ensure that your school continues to improve, we have asked your headteacher and his staff to focus on raising standards by:

- making sure that you and your teachers know the levels at which you are currently working and are clear about what you need to do to improve
- taking steps to ensure that all teaching matches the examples that we saw of teaching that motivated you and kept you working well.

I look forward to seeing your school go from strength to strength. You can help it do that by taking full advantage of the growing number of opportunities that you are given to develop your personal abilities and interests.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Metham
Her Majesty's Inspector

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